

How wet has, April been? According to the weatherman, it has been of the wets since records began. This had to effects on the flying one, we could not fly in the rain and second when the sun did come out it proved just to wet to take off and land.

This issue is mainly filled with Lee Hoopers last words as president. There is also a short article from are new president Simon Jenkins, and Robin Corcoran writes a short piece on ballooning, enjoy.

Up and coming Events

As we welcome in the summer we also welcome in latter starts for evening ballooning. Sun set is now around 20.40 and by the end of May will be past 21.00. So what does all this mean? Well it gives us the opportunity to fly after the university day and also after work for those who finish around 17.00. Most of the crews will be organised by the pilots and couple of days before the said flight. To be involved all you have to do is e-mail

██████████ with your name and a contact phone number, then when flights are going ahead you will be contacted.

The other event that BUHABS will be taking part in is the Bath balloon fiesta it is on the weekend of the 20th and 21st May. Due to the fact that the event is so close to Bristol, the weekend will be round like any other on a signing of basis.

Notes From the Editor...

For once I have hardly anything to say which I am sure will please some of you and help keep the spelling mistakes to a minimum. This is the first month for ages that I have not been out ballooning, which proves how bad the weather has been. Hopefully May will bring a bit more sunshine. Enjoy your flying to all those doing exams good luck, soft landings.

SUPERNATURAL Art Of Ballooning

By Robin Corcoran

On that historic day of the first ever hot air balloon flight, back in 1783, those legendary heroes, Marquis D'Arlandes and Pilatre de Rozier, must have prayed to their God (probably some pagan wind god), lit their bonfire, hopped on to their huge paper bag and, not having a clue what was going to happen next..... scared the willies out of themselves (Personally I think that the link between first flights in hot air balloons and champagne is that those two French heroes probably got completely trolleyed before they took to the sky).

Psychologically not a lot has changed in two hundred years. You can often find the BUHABS pilots cowering in the back of the van being coaxed out by the experienced

crewmembers. Or holding their hands (or in some cases handkerchief) in supplication to the sky hoping for some divine signal to tell them in what direction the wind is actually blowing. Occasionally you may see the higher (and I do not mean taller) pilots among us letting off a sacrificial balloon that will be cast skywards its fate unknown. These usually take the form of helpless small black helium filled balloons, or just some green inexperienced pilot and their balloon who filled with youthful ignorance have not quite grasped the concept of 'windy'. Knowledge of this condition can only really be gained by experience even though young pilots will have listened religiously to the tales told by those sage like elders. These tales almost inevitably centre around the drag landing. The 'drag' being measured in units of metres or yards depending on the pilots age.

The inexperienced almost certainly learn quite quickly that 'windy' is a supernatural meteorological phenomenon that transports the balloon with great speed to somewhere the pilot's consciousness does not want to go. Which in the early days of a pilots career will include just about everywhere. It will also affect the pilots perception by making even the largest of grass fields contract into nothing more than a modest allotment plot. This change in perception has the side effect of the pilot developing an enhanced sense of ground phobia, and many times pilots will be seen descending ground wards only to climb hopelessly into the unforgiving sky. However, this does not stop the pilot from letting their balloon hug the landscape, since they know that to go higher into the atmosphere only serves to increase 'the windiness'. Only when the pilot does summon up enough sense of reality to overcome their phobia will they even attempt to get close to the ground. The rate at which their fear is overcome generally determines the final outcome of the landing. The pilot who gradually and calmly becomes more and more courageous will almost certainly be more successful than the impulsive pilot that plummets earthwards. These latter pilots are those most susceptible to another state of the psyche called the 'out of basket experience'. Reports of these events are generally confined to the early years of ballooning, however occasional cases are still reported even today (Mentioning no names, but the pilots with the higher centre of gravity are most susceptible to this condition). The experience commonly involves the pilot trawling along the ground, their balloon sailing in front of them, their only link to it being via a thin red umbilical line.

When it is all finally over and the balloon comes to rest. The pilot can often be seen practising a ground worship ceremony. This takes the form of the pilot laying prostrate on the earth occasionally chanting in a groaning manner. Sometimes the chosen landowner will also participate in this ceremony. Their part is to dance around the field shaking their fists and shouting, "get off my land". In some regions, an offering will sometimes be made to the landowner, consisting of some alcoholic beverage or a small piece of pottery.

For those with faith the likelihood of a windy event occurring can be gleaned from the prescient knowledge of the Oracles of Bristol Airport. Little is known about their methods or tools of the trade, but it is rumoured that they make use of a rams head, a wood fire and heavy metal music. The smoke as it drifts into the atmosphere revealing future events such as the cloud base, wind speed and direction. The wise pilot will not however completely trust such foreseeers (especially the BBC) and they are usually well practised in reading the signs available in nature to make their decisions. Each pilot will almost certainly have their own sacred 'met tree'. The thrashing of which will serve to tell them that their time will be better spent catching up on vital sleep lost on Friday night than to enter the world of 'the windy'. As one old, wise, probably boring and lacking in any spirit of adventure pilot once said. "It is better to be on the ground wishing you were up there. Than up there wishing you were on the ground."

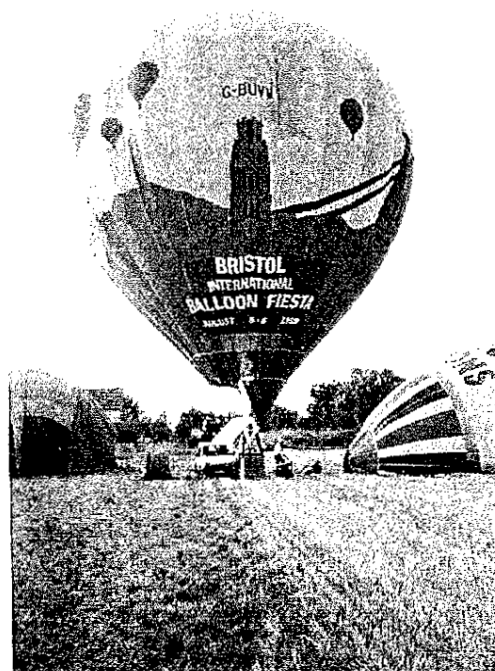
Notes from the PUT

Those of you who attended the AGM (and we know who the ONE member who didn't turn up was - it's your round next year....) will know that Lee stepped down as president to work on his finals and handed over to me after 5(?) years in office. I only hope I can do the

job as well as Lee. Thanks for all your years of hard work and handing over such a well-organised club.

On Wednesday 5th April just after the end of term I went on a commercial job with Lee, Scott, and Peter for Bristol Balloon Fiestas Ltd. GWR radio are partially sponsoring the Fiesta Balloon this year and wanted us to tether for the entertainment of some record company guests. (Lee also promised that we would get to meet the girl-band 'Precious' – mmm...) I was hoping that I would get the chance to tether the balloon and sign off that all-important page in my pilot training logbook. However, it was not to be.

We arrived at Charlton House, south of Radstock, just after lunchtime. There didn't seem anywhere suitable for tethering balloons on our initial look at the site, then we were shown to the front lawn and a spot was chosen for us to set up. We had two GWR Black Thunder vehicles (complete with Black Thunder girls) - both of which had probably seen better days - to attach the balloon to. A third 4x4 completed the triangle. The wind was blowing ridiculously fast and there was no way I was going to do my first tether. We laid out the balloon and went in for coffee while a balloon-sculpting clown was entertaining the guests. His repertoire included not only the traditional balloon sausage dogs but also some bright balloon hats and sculptures of a more adult nature!! After coffee (Sorry, Latte – They didn't do normal coffees, only posh ones) we returned to the garden and attempted a very short and gusty tether. The balloon was all over the place and I think Lee managed to get it off the ground for about 30 seconds before giving up and deflating. Just enough for the corporate guests to see it. While we (crew of slaves) packed up the envelope Lee was letting important inebriated people wearing balloon hats play with the burners and take photographs.



All in all, it was an interesting day and we got to see possibly the worlds shortest tether and learn how to set the rope system up properly. It was also a brief introduction to the world of commercial ballooning where things can sometimes take place in slightly dodgy flying conditions. (You're much safer with BUHABS) Hopefully there will be an opportunity to try again soon, but for now I'm off to revise for my PPL exams. I might as well join the rest of you and do some exams in May. Oh and by the way, where were 'Precious', Lee?

Presidents Report 2000

Well, here I am at my last ever AGM No please put the tissues away. When I began writing this I decided to look at how old I was when I first gave my first ever Presidents report. Well believe it or not I was just 16 and here I am all these years later, a little fatter and hopefully a little more wiser. I looked back through previous reports and if you have heard any of my previous reports then you will see that they hardly change from year to year. This is not because I am a lazy git or can't be bothered but as you will see later is due to many other things.

So, what have we been up to in the last year? Well we had a mixed bag in terms of flying the summer was a bit hit or miss with many UPS AND DOWNS (Get it). We did managed to get fired up a few times and go ballooning. Oh, come on guys this is the last time I can get all those corny puns in that I am so famous for. Anyway as I said a mixed bag of flying all the summers balloon meets we attended were dogged by the Weather. We attended Bath (Wet & Windy); Longleat (Nice weather, but we were only there for some of the

time); Bristol (Bit iffy but the flight Director was a REALLY NICE GUY); Newark (Nice if you are a nutter and want to make use of the BUHABS helmets) so all in all, not the best, trip wise. We also went to Vermenton in France but again were met by mixed MET conditions. As for the run of the mill flying, this plodded on and when it was flyable, the balloon was seen trudging over the skies of Bristol. I wasn't as active as I would have liked to been with the club this summer but this was due to other commitments as we will see later. Many BUHABS pilots had notable achievements this year. Tom bought his own balloon (I still want my 10% commission Tom for telling you about it). Tim Dudman got his license and soloed in the best balloon ever built, a big well done to him. Robin bought his own balloon and Paul came second in the British ballooning championships. He was just 100 points short of the leader. I got my Commercial pilots license and managed to go a whole 6 months without crashing my car, although this talent manifested itself in other hobbies of mine???????????? In addition to the above Simon Jenkins became a new PUT and is now well into his Training. Other notable achievements this year but not ballooning related. Paul Spellward married Elaine in September and to use the words of the wise and masterful one, their wedding was awesome. I never knew Robin was such a good line dancer. Their wedding was great but I enjoyed the honeymoon much better (ask me after the AGM). Simon and Josie had baby Boy named Tom after our pilot Tom. His middle name doesn't begin with a J though. A big well done is deserved to both of these, they are some of our most committed BUHABS members. They have provided us with the BUHABS members of the future. Maybe some of you other couples should follow their lead. At least you could practice it lots!!!

BUHABS in the news Apart from the obvious achievements noted above. BUHABS or BUHABS members the ground by reversing the down wind tether far to fast. I was involved in a documentary series teaching a BBC reporter to fly. This featured myself, Paul Spellward, Tim and many other BUHABS members as crew. Robins balloon got in the shots and B5 featured quite heavily. This all culminated when whilst Tim and I were walking around a supermarket (Can't remember why) but anyway I got recognized as the pilot off the TV how cool. Ask Tim D that is a true story.

It wasn't all glitz and glam and we mustn't forget the people that keep the club running. My thanks go out to my committee, yes we argue but what committee doesn't we get things done and seem very good at leaving what ever was said in the committee meetings and get on very well outside the meetings. I would also like to thank you the members for signing up you are very important part of the club. I would also like to thank the most important people in the club, NO NOT THE PILOTS although they do deserve thanks cheers. I am talking about the drivers without them the club would and sometimes does come to a grinding HALT. So thank you, Simon, Josie, Rowan, Tim D, James, and Will etc....

Well after the poor summer, we have had a great winter probably one of the best ever in our 14 year history. You may find it hard to believe but BUHABS has flown 20 times since October, an excellent amount. The balloon was flying on MILLENNIUM Day although I wasn't the pilot as I was still in a nightclub?? Tim D also took the balloon to the Icicle balloon meet in January and flew with 83 other balloons in some challenging conditions with lots of shear. Another notable flight by Tim last year is when he landed on Princess Ann front lawn and got arrested and appeared in the Sunday Mirror as a Security breach SHAME ON YOU. So, for those of you who haven't been signing up? See what you have missed!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Anyway I know what you are thinking why is my report the same as previous years. Well as I said it is not because I am a lazy git or can't be bothered, it more stands testament to our clubs strength. The reason why my reports are pretty much the same year to year are because the club after it's 14-year history now seems to be stable. Our flying service to our members is excellent and the equipment is of very high standard. The clubs pilots and drivers are some of the best on the ballooning circuit and many of us hold key positions within the ballooning community. Paul S is one of the most respected pilots in the country and Chairman of the local ballooning region. I am the Flight Director of the Bristol Balloon fiesta. Tom is an international plane bloke and Robin is a DR of Physics with other interests including Snow boarding (RADICAL). He is also one of the most efficient Fuel officers we have (Sorry Robin I had to mention it.). All this makes our club one of the most respected university clubs in the country, we are without a doubt the most of, and in stark contrast to when we started 14 years ago when they used to say oh my god it's those bloody students again. We have proved them all wrong and I hope the respect other balloonists have for our club will last for many years to come. On a personal and slightly emotional note this is my last ever president report. As most of you know I am standing down now. I've been President for 5 years and have loved every minute of it. For those of U who can remember when I first joined and how I looked like a girl. Well look at where I am now in ballooning terms. I think I owe a large part of that to the club and the people within it. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all very much. I hope I have been a good President and that I may continue to serve the club as a pilot.

I would also like to challenge the new committee to really put a lot of work into this club to A) improve it and B) to continue it's survival. The one area we are consistently poor in are the socials and I would really like to see the new committee address this issue seriously and not just put it off until the next committee and so on and so on. As I always say, you get out of BUHABS what you put into it. I hope you heed this advice and good luck to all of you. By Lee Hooper